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ABSTRACT

All groups, from teachers to administrators to colleges and all other groups, tend to protect their own interests. Students, however, cannot form powerful groups to protect their own intersts, and therefore, the state should have a role as advocate for children as consumers of education. Most states delegate the responsibility of providing an education to the board of education, which must decide what outcome will be desirable for students. Since the board must remain sensitive to public opinion and criticism, it is appropriate for it to have an ultimate voice in teacher certification. Schools of education, on the other hand, should have input but not final control because their perspective is limited. They tend, for instance, to overvalue course work and undervalue real life performance ability. Teachers should not exclusively regulate the profession either; if they have that power they will not use it in the public interest any more than doctors or lawyers do. A board of education is at least minimally accountable because the highest officer is usually elected or appointed. State boards should be composed of laymen, not professional educators. If a policy board of laymen is established to oversee the administrative agency and if opportunities are provided for the public to scrutinize the bureaucratic process, we will have the structures necessary to insure state responsiveness. (CD)

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SECRETARY OF EDUCATION

"A GOVERNANCE ROLE FOR THE STATE AGENCY: CONSUMER ADVOCATE"

ASSOCIATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

FEBRUARY 5, 1976

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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THE ARGUMENT THAT I WANT TO MAKE HERE TODAY EVENTUALLY WILL REACH TWO MAJOR POINTS.

THEY WILL BE THESE: (1) THE STATE MUST CONTINUE TO HAVE A STRONG ROLE IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSION: AND (2) THAT ROLE SHOULD BE EXERCISED AS AN ADVOCATE ON BEHALF OF THE CONSUMER. TO PUT THE SECOND POINT ANOTHER WAY: THE STATE MUST BE THE WATCHDOG OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

LET ME SPEND A FEW MINUTES EXPLAINING WHY I ARRIVE AT THESE POINTS. THEN I'LL EXPLORE THEIR IMPLICATIONS IN SOME DETAIL.

I'VE GOT TO CONFESS AT THE OUTSET, THAT THERE IS A PARTICULARLY DEEP STREAK OF THE CALVINIST IN ME. I HAPPEN TO BELIEVE THAT EXCEPT FOR CERTAIN RARE MOMENTS WHEN WE RESPOND TO UNUSUAL CHALLENGES OR EMOTIONS, THAT EACH OF US ACTS PRIMARILY OUT OF SELF INTEREST. THE FIRST IMPULSE IS TO PRESERVE. TO FORTIFY ONE'S DEFENSES. TO PEER OUT FROM BEHIND THE WALLS WITH A WARY EYE AT REAL OR IMAGINED THREATS.

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ORGANIZATIONS ARE EVEN MORE INCLINED THAT WAY THAN INDIVIDUALS. ON THAT POINT, YOU NEEDN'T ACCEPT MY THEOLOGY. THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE IS CLEAR. HOWEVER LOFTY THEIR STATED PURPOSES, ORGANIZATIONS EVENTUALLY ARE SHAPED AND GUIDED IN RESPONSE TO THE SELF INTEREST OF THEIR MEMBERS AND THE SURVIVAL OF THE INSTITUTION ITSELF: BE IT A CHURCH, A BANK, A UNION OR A GOVERNMENT AGENCY. IT IS WRITTEN IN THE LAWS OF HUMAN CONDUCT AND THE MEANING OF THE WORD "ORGANIZATION" THAT SELF INTEREST WILL DOMINATE.

I DON'T CONDEMN THAT. OR TEAR MY HAIR OUT. IT'S SIMPLY A FACT TO BE RECOGNIZED.

TO THINK CLEARLY ABOUT THE ISSUE OF GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATION, WE NEED TO REALIZE THAT THE LAW OF SELF INTEREST OPERATES AMONG US AS WELL.

THERE IS NOTHING STRANGE OR FORBIDDING ABOUT TEACHERS ACTING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF TEACHERS. IT WOULD BE STRANGE IF THEY DID NOT.

NOR IS IT STRANGE OR FORBIDDING WHEN COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES ACT TO IMPROVE THEIR STRENGTH AND STATUS. IT WOULD BE UNNATURAL TO DO ANYTHING ELSE.

THE ROLE COULD BE CALLED ON ALL THE RANKS WITHIN EDUCATION WITH THE SAME RESULT: SCHOOL BOARDS, SUPERINTENDENTS, PRINCIPALS AND SO ON.

OF COURSE, THE RHETORIC TENDS TO CONCEAL THE REALITY. STRIKING TEACHERS SAY THEY ARE CHIEFLY INTERESTED IN KIDS. RECALCITRANT SCHOOL BOARDS PROFESS TO BE GUIDED BY THE SAME MOTIVE. AND THE WORLD OF HIGHER EDUCATION IS NOT FREE FROM SIMILAR CANT.

WHEN I BECAME SECRETARY OF EDUCATION IN PENNSYLVANIA FIVE YEARS AGO NOW, I SURVEYED THE LIST OF ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS WITH WHICH I WOULD HAVE TO DEAL. I WAS STRUCK BY THE FACT THAT THE ONE GROUP THAT DID NOT HAVE ANY VOICE -- AND CONTINUES WITHOUT ADEQUATE VOICE -- IS THE STUDENT.

FOR A NUMBER OF REASONS -- MOST OF THEM FAIRLY OBVIOUS -- STUDENTS ARE THE ONE GROUP WITHIN EDUCATION THAT CANNOT DEVELOP AN ORGANIZATION OF SUFFICIENT STABILITY TO DEFEND THE INTERESTS OF ITS MEMBERS.

IT SEEMED OBVIOUS TO ME THAT THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY OF MY DEPARTMENT -- AND OF THE STATE -- WAS TO ADDRESS THIS PROBLEM. IN PENNSYLVANIA, AS IN OTHER STATES, OUR CONSTITUTION CHARGES THE STATE --

SPECIFICALLY, THE LEGISLATURE -- WITH PROVIDING A THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT SYSTEM OF EDUCATION. THE FIRST TEST OF THAT THOROUGHNESS AND EFFICIENCY IS WHAT STUDENTS ARE LEARNING. THAT IS THE TEST AGAINST WHICH ALL OTHER ISSUES AND DEMANDS MUST BE MEASURED.

INTERTWINED WITH THE QUESTION OF HOW WELL THE STUDENT IS BEING SERVED IS THE QUESTION: HOW WELL IS THE PUBLIC BEING SERVED? STUDENT OUTCOMES ARE THE TOUCHSTONE. BUT WHAT DOES THE PUBLIC BELIEVE TO BE THE MOST CRITICAL OF THESE OUTCOMES? AND HOW DOES THE PUBLIC WANT ITS MONEY AND RESOURCES MARSHALLED TO PRODUCE THESE OUTCOMES? THESE PUBLIC DEMANDS AND CONCERNS ARE A SECOND CONSIDERATION IN MEETING THE TEST OF THOROUGHNESS AND EFFICIENCY.

THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MEASURING THE SYSTEM BY THE YARDSTICKS OF STUDENT OUTCOMES AND PUBLIC DESIRES LIES WITH THE STATE. THE STATE LEGISLATURE DELEGATES THAT CHARGE TO THE STATE AGENCY; MORE PARTICULARLY, TO THE STATE BOARD AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

TO BE HONEST ABOUT IT -- AND RIGOROUSLY CALVINISTIC AS WELL -- I MUST ADMIT THAT THE STATE AGENCY IS NOT ALTOGETHER FREE FROM THE LAW OF SELF INTEREST.

FIEFDOMS SPRING UP WITHIN THE BUREAUCRACY AND THEIR PRINCES AND DUKES DEFEND THEM TENACIOUSLY. BUREAUCRATS DON'T THROW UP FORTRESSES, OF COURSE. THEY CONSTRUCT MAZES OF SUCH INTRICACY THAT THE ENEMY CAN'T REACH THEM.

BUT SELF INTEREST IN A PUBLIC AGENCY IS AN UNNATURAL ACT OR, TO BE MORE ACCURATE, IT IS NATURAL BUT ILLEGITMATE. BY DEFINITION PUBLIC AGENCIES EXIST TO SERVE THE PUBLIC. TO THE EXTENT THAT THEY PUT THEIR OWN SURVIVAL AND POWER AHEAD OF THE PUBLIC INTEREST, THEY STAND TO BE CONDEMNED IN WAYS THAT A UNION OR AN ASSOCIATION OF SUPERINTENDENTS WOULD NOT BE.

PRESSURES DO EXIST TO KEEP US RESPONSIVE. LEGISLATORS, FOR INSTANCE. PUBLIC OPINION. THE PRESS. AND THE VIGOROUS LOBBYING OF THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT PLAY IN THE EDUCATIONAL GAME.

THE AGENCY NEEDS TO BE OPEN TO THESE PRESSURES WITHOUT BEING CAPTURED BY ANY ONE OF THEM. I THINK THAT CALLS FOR A CERTAIN STYLE AND A CERTAIN STRUCTURE. BUT I'LL COME BACK TO THAT IN MORE DETAIL IN A MOMENT.

THE POINT I WANT TO STRESS HERE IS THAT THE STATE AGENCY HAS A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE GOVERNANCE OF ALL PHASES OF PUBLIC EDUCATION. WE CAN DEBATE METHODS BY WHICH THAT ROLE CAN BE MADE MORE EFFECTIVE. BUT THE ROLE ITSELF IS ESSENTIAL.

LET ME APPLY THIS PERSPECTIVE TO THE SPECIFIC QUESTION OF THE GOVERNANCE OF THE EDUCATION PROFESSIONS.

I DON'T BELIEVE FOR A MOMENT THAT THE ISSUE CAN BE LEFT SOLELY IN THE HANDS OF THE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS, NOR SOLELY IN THE HANDS OF THE PROFESSION. NOR DO I TRUST ANY COMBINATION OF THOSE TWO PARTIES; THEY ARE JUST AS CAPABLE AS GENERAL MOTORS AND THE UNITED AUTO WORKERS OF CONSPIRING AGAINST THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

THERE ARE AT LEAST THREE TENDENCIES IN ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS THAT MAKE ME WARY OF LETTING THEM BE THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY IN TEACHER TRAINING. THE FIRST IS THEIR TENDENCY TO PROLIFERATE COURSES AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS. THEY ARE MASTERS OF THE ADD-ON -- ESPECIALLY IN AN ERA OF LEVELLING AND DECLINING ENROLLMENTS.

THE SECOND IS THE TENDENCY TO EVALUATE ABILITY AND ACHIEVEMENT ON THE BASIS OF PERFORMANCE IN COURSES.

THE THIRD AND RELATED TENDENCY IS THEIR RELUCTANCE TO EXAMINE LIFE EXPERIENCES OR ALTERNATE FORMS OF LEARNING IN GRANTING THE DIPLOMA.

LET ME TELL YOU WHY I DEPLORE THESE TENDENCIES. I'LL COME AT IT IN A ROUNDABOUT FASHION.

WE NEED TO ADMIT TO OURSELVES THAT THERE IS VERY LITTLE HARD EVIDENCE ABOUT THE EXPERIENCES AND LEARNING THAT MAKE A GOOD TEACHER. IT IS A MUCH EASIER MATTER -- SOMETHING EACH OF US DOES ROUTINELY -- TO POINT TO SOMEONE IN ACTION AND SAY "THAT IS GOOD TEACHING." WE CAN THEN RATHER QUICKLY TICK OFF SOME OF THE OBVIOUS QUALITIES THAT LED TO OUR JUDGMENT. HE LIKES KIDS. SHE RELATES WELL TO PEOPLE. HE'S GOT A HANDLE ON THE INFORMATION. SHE KNOWS HOW TO BRING OUT THE BEST IN EACH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT. HE'S ENTHUSIASTIC. AND SO ON.

BUT THESE ARE JUDGMENTS THAT CAN ONLY BE MADE WHEN SOMEONE IS IN ACTION WITH OTHER HUMAN BEINGS IN A REAL LIFE SETTING.

OUR ABILITY TO PREDICT FROM EXPERIENCES OTHER THAN THE ACT OF TEACHING ITSELF HOW SUCCESSFUL A PERSON WILL BE IS EXTREMELY LIMITED. I SUBMIT THAT ONE OF THE LEAST TRUSTWORTHY BAROMETERS TO READ FOR THAT PREDICTION IS THE PERSON'S PERFORMANCE IN THE AVERAGE COLLEGE CLASSROOM.

I WOULD MUCH RATHER LOOK TO THAT PERSON'S PERFORMANCE IN OTHER AREAS.

HAS HE SHOWN SOME ENTHUSIASM IN WORKING WITH KIDS IN HIS NEIGHBORHOOD BACK HOME? HAS SHE WORKED DURING THE SUMMERS AS A TOUR GUIDE IN THE CITY MUSEUM? DID HE DO VOLUNTEER WORK WITH THE COMMUNITY AMBULANCE SERVICE WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL? IS SHE ACTIVE IN CAMPUS POLITICS?

AND SO ON. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT THE QUESTION: WHAT GRADE DID HE GET IN FOUNDATIONS OF EDUCATION I IS ONLY MARGINALLY RELEVANT.

I AM THEREFORE RELUCTANT TO GIVE THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS MORE AUTHORITY TO DECIDE WHO IS QUALIFIED TO TEACH, SINCE THEY HAVE SHOWN DECIDED TENDENCIES TO ASK THE WRONG QUESTIONS.

I DON'T MEAN TO SUGGEST, OF COURSE, THAT TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS SHOULDN'T PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN SHAPING THE REQUIREMENTS. BACK IN THE LATE 1960's WE WENT IN PENNSYLVANIA FROM A COURSE-AND-CREDIT REGIMEN TO A SYSTEM OF PROGRAM APPROVAL; "LOVE ME PROGRAM, LOVE MY GRADUATE" IS ONE WAY OF DESCRIBING IT. WITH MINOR EXCEPTIONS, I THINK IT HAS NOT WORKED BADLY; AT THE VERY LEAST. I WOULD NOT WANT TO RETURN TO THE EARLIER WAYS OF DOING BUSINESS. BUT I'M NOT ABOUT TO ALLOW THE TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS TO SET THE ULTIMATE GOALS.

THE STATE AGENCY HAS A PIVOTAL ROLE TO PLAY IN THIS REGARD. IT NEEDS TO MONITOR CONTINUALLY THE STATE OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS, TO ASSESS THEIR NEEDS. IT MUST THEN PROD THE TRAINING INSTITUTIONS SO THEY FOCUS ON THE ACTUAL SKILLS THAT WILL BE REQUIRED OF TEACHERS ENTERING THE SCHOOLS. BEYOND THAT, THE AGENCY HAS TO PERMIT GREAT FLEXIBILITY IN STRATEGY AND METHODS SO THAT ITS PRODDING DOES NOT SIMPLY GENERATE ANOTHER SPATE OF REQUIRED COURSES.

AS MANY OF YOU MAY KNOW, PENNSYLVANIA HAS DONE A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT OF WORK IN COMPETENCY-BASED TEACHER TRAINING. MY REASONS FOR SUPPORTING OUR MOVES IN THAT DIRECTION RELATE DIRECTLY TO WHAT I HAVE JUST SAID. I WANT TO SEE THE INSTITUTIONS FOCUS ON A MODEST NUMBER OF SKILLS THAT ARE THE MARK OF THE GOOD TEACHERS. THOSE SKILLS SHOULD BE DEVELOPED THROUGH A WIDE VARIETY OF EXPERIENCES. COURSE REQUIREMENTS SHOULD BE ELIMINATED AND THE STUDENT EVALUATED FOR REAL COMPETENCE MEASURED BY PERFORMANCE IN REAL LIFE SETTINGS.

I DON'T SEE THE ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS DOING THAT WITHOUT SOME PRODDING AND ENCOURAGEMENT. BUT I THINK IT IS IN THE STUDENT AND THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

WELL, IF TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS CAN'T BE TRUSTED, WHAT ABOUT TEACHER THEMSELVES? WHY NOT SELF-REGULATION? SEVERAL STATES HAVE, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, GONE FAIRLY FAR DOWN THAT PATH ALREADY. IS IT THE PATH OF THE FUTURE?

WHEN TEACHERS ARGUE FOR SELF GOVERNANCE, THEY OFTEN POINT TO THE EXAMPLE SET BY OTHER PROFESSIONS, NAMELY LAW AND MEDICINE.

I HAPPEN TO BE A LAWYER. SO I SAY WITH SOME FEELING THAT YOU COULDN'T CHOOSE A WEAKER ARGUMENT.

LAWYERS AND DOCTORS ARE NOTORIOUSLY INSENSITIVE TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST. IT IS ONLY THROUGH CONSIDERABLE PUBLIC PRESSURE AND BROWBEATING THAT THEY HAVE BEGUN IN RECENT YEARS TO YIELD AWAY PIECES OF THEIR SELF GOVERNANCE BY INCLUDING LAYMEN ON THE BOARDS REVIEWING THEIR ETHICAL PRACTICES. IT TOOK WATERGATE TO CONVINCE THE LEGAL PROFESSION THAT IT HAD A PROBLEM; I TRUST THAT THE RECENT NEW YORK TIMES SERIES ON THE MEDICAL PROFESSION WILL SERVE A SIMILAR PURPOSE.

IN SHORT, I FIND NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT THE NOTION THAT A SELF GOVERNING PROFESSION POLICES ITSELF WITH EFFICIENCY AND WITH ANY REAL SENSITIVITY TO THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

THE PROFESSIONS NOT ONLY PAY VERY LITTLE ATTENTION TO PUBLIC CRITICISM -- EXCEPT TO HOWL IN PAIN WHEN IT OCCURS. THEY ALSO ARE NOTORIOUS FOR ESTABLISHING AND ADJUSTING ENTRY RITES TO KEEP THE ORGANIZATION AS COMFORTABLE AND CLUBBY AS POSSIBLE. IN SHORT, THE SPIRIT OF MONOPOLY PREVAILS.

I HAVE LITTLE FAITH THAT A SELF-POLICING TEACHING PROFESSION COULD AVOID THESE PITFALLS. IN FACT, THE RESULTS TO MY MIND WOULD BE WORSE. IN THE OTHER PROFESSIONS, THE CLIENT AT LEAST HAS SOME FREEDOM OF CHOICE. IF YOUR DOCTOR IS NOT CURING YOU, YOU CAN LOOK FOR ANOTHER.

IF YOUR LAWYER LANDS YOU IN JAIL, YOU DON'T GO BACK TO HIM.

THE STUDENT AND HIS PARENTS HAVE, UNLESS THEY ARE RICH, NO SUCH FREEDOM. PUBLIC EDUCATION AFTER ALL IS MONOPOLISTIC. THE KIDS ARE BOUND UNDER COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE LAWS TO BE THERE. THEY ARE GROUPED INTO CLASSES BY THE COMPUTER. THEY INHERIT THE TEACHER ASSIGNED BY THE SCHOOL.

AN ADVOCATE REPRESENTING THE STUDENT AND PUBLIC POINT OF VIEW MUST HAVE A ROLE IN DETERMINING THE QUALITY OF PERSON THAT ENDS UP IN FRONT OF THOSE CLASSROOMS. MY ARGUMENT IS THAT THE ROLE RIGHTFULLY BELONGS TO THE STATE AGENCY.

LET ME NOW FACE HEAD ON THE ISSUE OF WHETHER THE STATE CAN ACTUALLY PLAY THE ROLE OF ADVOCATE RATHER THAN BUREAUCRATIC MEDDLER.

ARE WE EXEMPT FROM THE CALVINIST VIEW WHICH I ENUNCIATED A FEW MINUTES AGO? BY NO MEANS. ARE THERE SAFEGUARDS AGAINST A STATE AGENCY ACTING SOLELY OUT OF SELF INTEREST? I THINK THERE ARE.

THE STATE AGENCY HAS A DEGREE OF ACCOUNTABILITY BUILT IN AT LEAST AT THE TOP ADMINISTRATIVE LEVELS. IN MANY STATES THE CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICER IS ELECTED. HE OR SHE CAN BE VOTED OUT IF THINGS GO AWRY. IN OTHER STATES -- MY OWN INCLUDED -- THE SECRETARY IS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR OR THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, AND SERVES AT THEIR PLEASURE.

POLITICAL PRESSURES OF VARIOUS KINDS CAN BE EXERTED TO MAKE US MORE RESPONSIVE TO THE CONCERNS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS.

WHILE THE ELECTED OR APPOINTED STATUS OF THE CHIEF IS IMPORTANT, MY OWN VIEW IS THAT AT LEAST TWO OTHER CONDITIONS HAVE TO BE MET TO MAKE SURE THAT THE STATE IS GENUINELY RESPONDING TO PUBLIC INTEREST.

THE FIRST CONDITION IS THE EXISTENCE OF A STRONG STATE BOARD. THE BOARD SHOULD BE COMPOSED OF PERSONS WHO ARE NOT PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS AND SHOULD HAVE REGULATORY AND POLICY SETTING RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE STATE AGENCY. A NUMBER OF PURPOSES ARE SERVED BY THAT KIND OF STRUCTURE. IN THE FIRST INSTANCE IT GIVES LAYMEN ULTIMATE CONTROL OVER PUBLIC EDUCATION, WHICH IS THE WAY IT SHOULD BE. SECONDLY, IT PROVIDES A POLICY BOARD TO WHICH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS CAN RELATE AND WITH WHICH THEY CAN LOBBY. THIRDLY, IT CREATES A MEANS OF KEEPING THE BUREAUCRATS IN CHECK. (BUREAUCRATIC EXCESS IS A FAR GREATER DANGER IN GOVERNANCE THAN ARE POLICIES AND REGULATIONS ADOPTED UNDER PUBLIC SCRUTINY BY A STATE BOARD.)

MY SECOND CONDITION FOR GUARANTEEING RESPONSIVENESS IS THE CREATION OF A NUMBER OF ROUTES BY WHICH THE PROFESSIONALS AND THE PUBLIC CAN INFLUENCE DECISION MAKING BY THE STATE. I HAVE A VARIETY OF

STRUCTURES IN MIND. PENNSYLVANIA AS WELL AS A NUMBER OF OTHER STATES NOW HAS AN ADVISORY COMMISSION ON PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS. THE COMMISSION IS COMPOSED OF TEHACERS, TEACHER TRAINERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND STUDENTS. THAT IS A VALUABLE DEVELOPMENT THAT AT THE VERY LEAST OPENS TO PUBLIC SCRUTINY AND DEBATE ACTIONS PROPOSED BY THE STATE BOARD OR STATE DEPARTMENT.

A VARIETY OF OTHER DEVICES ARE NEEDED. PENNSYLVANIA, FOR INSTANCE, HAS A SUNSHINE LAW THAT REQUIRES PRIOR NOTICE OF ALL POLICY-SETTING MEETINGS AND AN OPEN DOOR TO ALL WHO WISH TO ATTEND. OR TO TAKE ANOTHER EXAMPLE, UNDER A REVISION OF THE STATE SCHOOL LAWS, CURRENTLY BEING DEBATED BY THE LEGISLATURE, MY DEPARTMENT WILL BE REQUIRED TO REEXAMINE AND PUBLISH ALL AGENCY REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS. THAT PROCESS WILL BRING TO THE SURFACE FOR SCRUTINY ALL FORMAL AND INFORMAL STANDARDS BY WHICH THE BUREAUCRACY HAS BEEN FUNCTIONING. THAT WILL OFFER THEPUBLIC AND THE PROFESSIONALS ANOTHER CHANCE TO BEND US TO THEIR WILLS.

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, MY DEPARTMENT TOOK THAT STEP ON ITS OWN WITH OUR CERTIFICATION POLICIES. MANY OF THOSE POLICIES HAD GROWN LIKE TOPSY OVER THE YEARS. DECISIONS OCCASIONALLY WERE BASED ON SOME ARCANE ORAL TRADITION. WE HAVE PUT ALL OF THOSE POLICIES INTO WRITTEN FORM, CIRCULATED THEM TO THE WORLD AND INVITED CRITICISM. OUT OF THAT PROCESS SHOULD COME

A CLEAVER SET OF POLICIES.

IF THESE TWO CONDITIONS ARE MET -- A POLICY BOARD OF LAYMEN TO OVERSEE THE ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY AND A SERIES OF REAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE BUREAUCRATIC PROCESS TO BE SCRUTINIZED BY THE PUBLIC -- WE WILL HAVE THE APPROPRIATE STRUCTURES TO INSURE STATE RESPONSIVENESS.

MY OWN VIEW IS THAT WE AT THE STATE LEVEL ERR MUCH MORE FREQUENTLY IN ESTABLISHING THE CRITERIA FOR THE VARIOUS FORMS OF CERTIFICATION THAN WE DO IN OUR PROGRAM APPROVAL PROCESS FOR THE TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS.

BUT MY OWN ATTEMPTS TO MAKE THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS MORE FLEXIBLE HAVE MET WITH SOME FIERCE OPPOSITION THAT MAKES ME DOUBTFUL ABOUT THE WISDOM OF RELINQUISHING THAT AUTHORITY.

THE PROFESSIONAL TEACHING ORGANIZATIONS GET EXTREMELY NERVOUS WHEN WE TINKER WITH THE CATEGORIES FOR CERTIFICATION. THEY HAVE A VESTED INTEREST IN CUTTING OFF ANY POSSIBILITY THAT AN ECONOMY MINDED SCHOOL BOARD MIGHT PERMIT A BIOLOGY MAJOR TO TEACH A LITTLE MATH OR COUNSELOR TO HANDLE SOME LUNCHROOM OR SECURITY DUTIES.

WHILE I'M SENSITIVE TO THE JOB SECURITY ISSUE, IT SEEMS TO ME WE ARE BEING FORCED INTO A PHONEY SYSTEM OF SPECIALIZED RANKINGS AMONG TEACHERS.

THAT IS ONLY FURTHER PROOF TO ME THAT THE STATE MUST KEEP AN ACTIVE HAND IN THE WHOLE PROCESS.

AS IN THE CASE OF TEACHER TRAINING INSTITUTIONS, I AM FAR FROM ARGUING THAT TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD PLAY NO ROLE IN SETTING THE STANDARDS BY WHICH TEACHERS ARE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED. I SUPPORTED THE BILL CREATING OUR PRESENT PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION. BUT I WOULD OPPOSE VIGOROUSLY ANY ATTEMPT TO PUT THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY IN ITS HANDS.

WHAT I FINALLY COME DOWN TO ARGUING -- AS I OFTEN DO WHEN I GET INTO QUESTIONS DEALING ESSENTIALLY WITH POWER -- IS THAT WE NEED A SYSTEM IN WHICH THE SELF INTEREST OF ANY ONE PARTY IS CHECKED AND BALANCED BY THE INTERESTS OF ANOTHER.

BUT, SINCE THE CONDUCT OF THE PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IS CONSTITUTIONALLY VESTED IN THE STATE, MY CONTENTION IS THAT THE STATE AGENCY HAS THE PRIMARY ROLE IN ALL GOVERNANCE ISSUES.

LET ME SUMMARIZE.

I HAVE ARGUED THAT ALL GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS ARE MOTIVATED CHIEFLY BY SELF INTEREST. I HAVE ARGUED, FOR THAT REASON, THAT FINAL AUTHORITY OVER THE STANDARDS BY WHICH PROFESSIONALS ARE TRAINED AND CERTIFIED CANNOT BE PLACED EXCLUSIVELY IN THE HANDS OF THE INSTITUTIONS

WHICH DO THE TRAINING OR THE PROFESSIONALS THEMSELVES.

I HAVE TRIED TO MAKE A CASE FOR A MAJOR STATE AGENCY ROLE IN SETTING THOSE STANDARDS. BUT I HAVE CONCEDED THAT EVEN STATE AGENCIES, NOMINALLY ACTING IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, CAN BE LED ASTRAY. I HAVE CONCLUDED, THEREFORE, THAT WE NEED TO STRENGTHEN AND MULTIPLY THE WAYS IN WHICH STATE AGENCIES ARE OPEN TO PERSUASION BY ALL RELEVANT INTEREST GROUPS. FINALLY, I HAVE SAID THAT STATE AGENCIES NEED TO BE ESPECIALLY TENDER TOWARD THE NEEDS AND CONCERNS OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE THE CONSUMERS OF THE SYSTEM.

BECAUSE THE ULTIMATE TEST IS WHAT HAPPENS TO THOSE KIDS. NOT WHAT HAPPENS TO TEACHERS -- EXCEPT AS IT AFFECTS THEIR ABILITY TO TEACH EFFECTIVELY. NOT WHAT HAPPENS TO COLLEGES -- EXCEPT AS IT AFFECTS THEIR ABILITY TO TEACH TEACHERS EFFECTIVELY. NOT WHAT HAPPENS TO STATE AGENCIES -- EXCEPT AS IT AFFECTS THEIR ABILITY TO PROMOTE EFFECTIVE TEACHING. BUT WHAT HAPPENS TO KIDS. BY THAT STANDARD, NONE OF US CAN BE COMPLACENT ABOUT THE PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS.